

# Prince George's County Public Schools Financial Incentive Rewards for Supervisors and Teachers

*The Financial Incentive Rewards for Supervisors and Teachers (FIRST) program in Prince George's County, Maryland, will reach approximately 100 teachers, 42 principals and assistant principals, and 8,000 to 10,000 students in the pilot year, 2008-09. Ten to 15 pilot schools will be selected from a pool of underperforming schools that are in some stage of corrective action or restructuring (schools that have failed to meet academic targets for at least 3 years and that have more than 30 percent of students enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program). The FIRST program will augment school supports that are already in place, including enhanced staffing allocations for content area coaches, mentors for teachers with fewer than 2 years of experience, additional leadership support, and other targeted student intervention programs.*

## Needs Assessment Results and General Information

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is the second largest school system in Maryland and serves more than 134,000 students. The students are primarily black (76.3 percent) and Hispanic (14 percent). The County's teacher population is generally stable, with 62 percent meeting the highly qualified criteria. The highly qualified teachers are not evenly distributed, however; less than one-third teach in schools with high percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. At the high school level, just 39.95 percent of teachers are highly qualified and teaching in schools with high percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Prince George's County struggles with maintaining a highly effective administrative staff—over 80 percent of principals have fewer than 3 years of experience in school administration.

## Background

Prince George's County is working to implement its new county-wide business plan, Children Come First; to move out of corrective action; and improve student achievement. Less than half of the students tested in PGCPS showed proficiency on the Maryland School Assessments, and less than half of high school students passed the mandatory high school graduation exams in English, biology, algebra, and government. The FIRST program targets (1) increasing teacher and administrator effectiveness leading to higher student achievement; (2) reforming teacher and administrator compensation systems to reward them for increased student achievement; (3) increasing the number of effective teachers teaching poor, minority, and disadvantaged students in hard-to-staff schools; and (4) creating a sustainable performance-based compensation system.

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| <b>LOCATION(S)</b>  | Prince George's County, Maryland                |
| <b>GRANT AMOUNT</b> | Year 1: \$572,425    5-year total: \$17,014,649 |
| <b>DURATION</b>     | 5 years   |
| <b>PARTNERS</b>     | None  |

## **Incentives**

The FIRST program will compensate participants based on student achievement, hard-to-staff subject areas, performance-based evaluation results, and professional advancement and contribution. Bonuses will be awarded to participating teachers (\$10,000), principals (\$12,500), and assistant principals (\$11,000) for meeting student achievement growth targets for the school (all three groups) and for individual student groups and tested subjects (teachers only); for teaching hard-to-staff subjects (teachers only); for meeting expectations on a standards-based evaluation system (all groups); for professional growth and development (all groups); assuming leadership and additional responsibilities to promote student achievement (administrators); and for participating in the Effective Practices Incentive Fund (EPIF) (all groups).

Each component of the compensation system is weighted to emphasize the importance of increased student achievement. Fifty percent of teacher bonuses and 60 percent of administrator bonuses are based on student achievement. Additional financial incentives are offered for participation in the EPIF: \$5,000 per teacher and \$12,000 per administrator.

## **Evaluation**

Student achievement will be measured using the Maryland State Assessments for grades 3 through 8 and the High School Assessments for grades 9 through 12. Additional local benchmark assessments for grades 3 through 8 are administered three times a year in reading and math, and local high school benchmark assessments are administered twice yearly. School-wide achievement targets will be set using growth over time modeling; a pilot program is being conducted in PGCPs during the 2006-07 school year. A similar model will be used for assessing individual student growth in the tested areas at the individual teacher/classroom level.

Teachers in the FIRST program will participate in performance-based evaluation that incorporates multiple observations, self-reflection, and external evaluations. Staff will be evaluated on planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities (based on the Danielson model Framework for Teaching). The administrator's portfolio evaluation process will include self-reflection and external evaluations.

The standards for evaluation will be based on six principles that include instructional leadership, assessment and supervision, management and organizational skills, community/parent partnerships, multicultural awareness and appreciation, and effective communications (based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders, and the Maryland Task Force on Administratorship).

## **Resources**

The PGCPs Board of Education has authorized multi-year budget allocations for salary enhancements to provide financial support for the FIRST program. The county has also secured corporate and foundation funding to augment the grant. Funding for maintaining the program after the grant period will come primarily from PGCPs' general operating fund.

## **Data Systems**

During spring of 2007, PGCPs will complete the review and purchase of a complete online data warehouse that will collect and link student-level data, including demographic information, achievement, attendance, disciplinary data, and transfers. The data warehouse will have the capability to link student-level data to individual schools and teachers.

## Year 1 Activities

In retrospect, with 1 year's successful work completed, several elements of planning and implementation have clearly emerged as key contributors to the success thus far. First, our initial year was devoted to intensive and comprehensive planning. Every aspect of the initiative was exhaustively reviewed. Second, our planning was done collaboratively, with every stakeholder group engaged and involved. To ensure this, two advisory groups representing teachers and administrators, selected by their bargaining units, joined with representatives selected by the superintendent to review and adjust every element of our effort. These groups met as frequently as every month, basing their participation upon the issues involved and the availability of the participants. These efforts were meticulously recorded and preserved. Third, our pilot year for implementation, now underway, was designed around a manageable number of schools, with 12 selected for 2008-09. Each succeeding year, 10 additional schools will be added. Finally, the design's complexity offered multiple opportunities for earning incentives, often within the same categories. Our "banding" of incentives within our Growth Over Time and Value-Added Models, provided challenging but reasonably achievable targets for our staff.

## Outlook for Year 2

With individuals within schools now making the decision to participate or not, early indications are showing an 80 to 90 percent voluntary participation rate. Final figures will not be available until the first week in September. The response rates were even more enthusiastic than projected and represent the success of the elements noted above, particularly the time to plan and the commitment to collaboration by all stakeholders.

The principal challenge this year will be in our introduction of a new and more rigorous performance-based evaluation system, based largely upon the work of Charlotte Danielson and the Framework for Teaching. Implementing any new evaluation is a challenge. This is all the more so with one that includes a robust framework, with heightened standards and significant expectations around conferencing and around meaningful teacher involvement in goal setting. The second challenge will be around identifying robust funding to support the medium-and long-range sustainability of the project. As elsewhere, the funding available from state and local sources has been dramatically reduced. The corporate and foundation funding to augment the grant has not materialized as envisioned, placing a greater share of the support of the grant on strictly local funding. Our final challenge will be to integrate our efforts here with the over-arching systemwide efforts at introducing a performance management system now underway.